

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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Yelgava and Vicinity

1. Much of Yelgava was damaged during the war. Churches had been restored, but not their towers. Latvian monuments, including a statue of the Latvian president, had been removed, and a statue of Lenin had been erected in front of the railroad station. The street called Katola iela had been completely destroyed. Both bridges over the Driksa and Dieolupe were wooden ones, and probably temporary. At the marketplace there was a wooden fence around the market, with gates on four corners. Inside the fence were booths for vendors; also barber shops, clothing stores, butcher shops, and other shops. A bus line was running on Liela iela from the market, but the bus was a small one, carrying only 10-12 passengers. In the spring of 1951 the town of Yelgava was partially flooded. Even Kalnciema was under water. There were no Germans in the camp near the sugar factory as of 1951.

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2. There was a big airfield in Yelgava.

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When coming to the town, or passing through, [redacted] sound of motors from the northern part of the town. [redacted] bombers were operating from this airport, because [redacted] the area where practice bombs were dropped and where there were buildings to indicate targets, as, for example, a dummy bridge. This area is near the forester's house, northeast of Dobele (N56-38, E23-17) across the railroad line. On the road into the woods there was a civilian guard in a shack, and the forest-workers asked him, before going any further, if there was any training scheduled for the bombers that day. Though the kolkhoz administration always asked by phone whether or not the area was free before the workers started to drive to the woods, they nevertheless always inquired at the guardhouse. If there had been training scheduled, workers were not permitted to enter the area.

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3. The Yelgava-Tukums (N56-59, E23-10) road was in poor condition [redacted]. The Bérze-Dobele road was in equally poor condition, and the streets in Dobele were in poor repair, though Liele iela in Yelgava was being repaired in the fall of 1950. Bridges were intact on the Bérze-Dobele and Bérze-Yelgava roads. In the fall of 1950 [redacted].

25X1 [redacted] the Yelgava-Riga road in very good condition, apparently repaired. There was a bridge over the Memele River near Bauska (N56-24, E24-10) in 1947 and a new bridge was erected there in 1948.

4. The main means of transportation was still the carriage. A stable in Yelgava charged about five rubles to watch the horses while their owner was in town. Workers could not afford 700-1400 rubles for a bicycle, and bicycles were seldom seen on country roads. The motor vehicle most often seen was a 1½-2-ton truck. Kirov kolkhoz did not have a truck of its own, but the machine tractor station was said to have several. Those seen on the highway were Soviet ZISes or Molotovs.

5. There was a Yelgava-Tukums bus which left Yelgava for Tukums in the evening and arrived in Yelgava at 1000 the following morning. The bus was a small one, carrying 10-12 passengers. [redacted] the fare from Bérze to Yelgava [redacted] was six rubles. Anyone was allowed to use the taxis, but aside from them one saw only military vehicles on the road. In April 1951 taxi fare was two rubles/kilometer.

6. The station at Livberze had not been damaged, and there was free access to the tracks. The railroad between Yelgava and Tukums was single-track. Passenger trains were in operation only every other day. At about 1500 there was a train in the direction of Tukums, and the next day about 0300 the train came back in the direction of Yelgava. [redacted] it was an ordinary train, containing first and second-class carriages. A ticket from Livberze-Yelgava cost 13 rubles, third-class, in 1951. The train arrived in Riga via Yelgava at 0700. [redacted] it meant one day's extra wait if one came early in the morning to Yelgava for one day. Usually source walked 18 kilometers and then took a taxi. There was no difficulty in obtaining a ticket, either in Livberze or other stations.

7. There was a cooperative store in Bérze where one could buy almost anything when it was available. Most people, however, shopped in Yelgava. The Universalveikals shop in Yelgava was a two-story building with several departments, open from 1100 to 1800. In the fall of 1950, [redacted] a pair of rubber-soled shoes, called "tanks", for 125 rubles. [redacted] a sport coat for 175 rubles at a tailors' artel. Also available on the market were old army items. [redacted] an army overcoat, dyed blue, for 300 rubles. [redacted] also able to buy a pair of black leather boots. Dzintars cigarettes cost ten rubles for a package of 100 and are genuine cigarettes, as are Mokka cigarettes. Papirovi cigarettes came in the following brands: Kazbek, extremely long, Pribor, Belomor, Riga, and Sports. Sports were available only after 1951, though they were well known before the war. Other prices were:

Commodity	Unit	Price (in rubles)
A colored postcard	1	50 kop
A bar of home-made soap	1	4-5 rb
A razor set	1	11 rb
Razor blades	10	4 rb
A 10 x 15 cm. mirror	1	9 rb
A small, imitation-leather suitcase	1	32 rb
Butter	kg	25-30 rb
Sugar	kg	12-19 rb

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Until 1950, the nearest barber shop was in Livberze. There a Latvian woman offered haircuts and shaves at her home. When she moved away from Livberze late in 1950, one had to go to Yelgava for a barber's service. There barbers worked market days in booths along the market fence. A haircut cost two rubles; a haircut plus shave, three rubles.

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25X1 The restaurants were run by some State organization, but there were waiters and waitresses as in private restaurants. Most people drank heavily. 40 per cent vodka cost 25 rubles per liter and 56 per cent vodka cost 35 rubles per liter. Kolkhozniki made beer from barley or, more usually, from sugar beets. In a bar or krogs, a man usually ordered a glass of beer and 100 grams of brandy. The beer cost 2.40 rubles and the brandy 2.50 rubles. A bottle of brandy, or pustops, cost 27 rubles.

Kirov Kolkhoz

9. The kolkhoz when first organized was called Berze, but in the fall of 1950 the kolkhozy of Berze and Zemgali were united under the name of Kirov. It was administered entirely by Latvians, except for one Soviet who married a Latvian woman. To the south, the border of the kolkhoz was the river Bérze. It bordered upon Auseikas, including Glāznieki, and followed the road to Degaini and Juksi to the railroad. Altogether there were 2500 hectares. Neighboring kolkhozy were named Daile and Stars, but source does not know their locations. The center of the Kirov kolkhoz was in Sauliesi, and the accountant for the kolkhoz lived there. This center had a telephone connection and electricity from the mill in Berzmuiza, produced by a small motor. In Upesliči some houses had electricity and telephones, but had to use oil lamps because no current was being delivered from the Kegums power station. Other houses did not have telephones; not even the remote brigades had been connected to the center by phone. [redacted] most phone calls were to the police, to the forester, to the Party offices in Yelgava and Dobeles, and to the Machine Tractor Stations in Yelgava and Dobeles. Only a few of the houses and buildings along the Bérze River were damaged in the war, but only a few of these had been repaired or rebuilt. Destroyed buildings included the following: Upmali, Imantas (only the stables), Sauliesi (stables and barn, the barn having been rebuilt, since Sauliesi was the center of the kolkhoz), Čelmi, Cirulī (the bridge is intact), Embēri (repaired by former owner), Berzini (stables and barn). The station at Livberze had not been ruined, nor had the center of Bérze. The former pāgastrāms there now had a post office on the second floor, and the selsoviet and militia downstairs. There was only one Soviet militiaman. Many of the former owners of the farms had been deported. The most recent deportations were in 1949, when a widow Sulcs from Lici farm was deported, and in 1950, when Vārpji was deported.

10. The kolkhoz did not have its own doctor. When a member of the kolkhoz froze his big toe in the winter of 1949-50, he was sent to a physician in Bérze, who was the doctor for the rayon. This doctor, a Latvian of about 50 years of age, issued to the patient a certificate relieving him from work for the following four weeks. The patient was not allowed to work, but he was not paid for the four weeks, which were not counted as working days in his trudovaya knizhka kolkhoznika. Salary was paid only for days worked, although for certain kinds of work two days' credit was given for one day worked. Neither was the injured worker given food or other support during the four-week layoff. His friends helped him with food over this period of time. The appointment with the doctor and the certificate were free of charge, but a patient had to pay for his own medicines. Since there was no pharmacy in Bérze, all drugs were prepared by the doctor. [redacted]

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[redacted] There was also a veterinarian in Bérze. He was a Soviet, and served not only Kirov kolkhoz, in which he resided, but several other kolkhozy also.

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## Radio and Press

11. In Kirov kolkhoz all but one person were Latvians. The one exception was a Soviet who had married a Latvian. This man had a big radio and was able to listen to several broadcasting stations. There was no regulation as to what not to listen to, but everybody knew that it was best to be cautious and not to listen to Western broadcasts. Whether or not the man did listen is not known. The apparatus operated from batteries, since there was no electricity in the houses of the kolkhoz. In 1950, [ ] bought a crystal set, called Komsomolets and costing 45 rubles. The annual fee was 5 rubles. However, one could receive only the local broadcasting station at Riga. One could hear other stations, but never distinctly. This Komsomolets set was quite popular. Riga broadcast in Latvian and in Russian, closing with the Soviet Latvian anthem. The most widely read newspaper was Cina, which cost 25 kopeks. It was received by subscription on the farm where source was living. Another newspaper was printed in Jelgava and was called Zemgales Komunisti. Neither one of them was interesting, but there were no other publications [ ]

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## Labor Camps

12. On Grundmani farm, north of the Kirov kolkhoz, not far from the Berze-Sipele railroad stop, there was established a colony for convicts. [ ]

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## Military Draft

13. All youths born 1930, 1931, and 1932 were ordered to appear in Dobele at the army draft board. [ ] a third German from the same kolkhoz were ordered by the chairman of their kolkhoz to go to Dobele to the house of the militia. They went by means of a horse team provided by their kolkhoz, each with a document stating that he had been called before the draft board and therefore had with him certain documents. The draft board consisted of Soviets in uniform, mostly doctors. One woman among them was a Latvian doctor who served as interpreter, since most of the youths were Latvians, though there were also Soviets. No exception was made for the Germans, though they had no documents other than trudovaya knizhka kolkhoznika. The military doctors made all examinations on the spot except chest X-rays, which were made in the town hospital by a Dr. Francmanis, a Latvian who spoke perfect German and was very kind to the German group. He was director of the hospital during the German occupation and still held that position. After the examination, all those examined were sent home with a paper stating the board's findings. [ ]

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## Holidays

14. Members of the kolkhoz were not permitted to celebrate Christmas, because New Year's was celebrated instead, with the Christmas tree called New Year's tree, and Santa Claus called Grandpa Frost. Children had to attend school, and parents did not dare disobey, though at home the people tried to put on a festive mood by making cookies and talking about former days. Besides New Year's, [ ] the 1st of May and the 7th of November as holidays. There were meetings in Perze on these days, with somebody from the town speaking. Otherwise the celebration consisted of getting drunk afterwards. Jani St. John's day, was celebrated [ ]

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[ ] There was no Easter or Whitsuntide celebration. People still sang Latvian songs, although many Soviet songs were known. It is significant that the youth of the kolkhoz, when singing the Soviet songs, interpolated anti-Soviet texts. [ ] one of these changed texts which parodies the famous song about Moscow: "Oh Moscow, thou magnificent, thou never conquerable...." This song was sung in Latvian as follows:

Ak Maskava, tu piedirsta

Tu muzam neiztirama

"Oh Moscow, thou full of manure, thou never to be cleaned...."

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